

# A & P, R.I.P

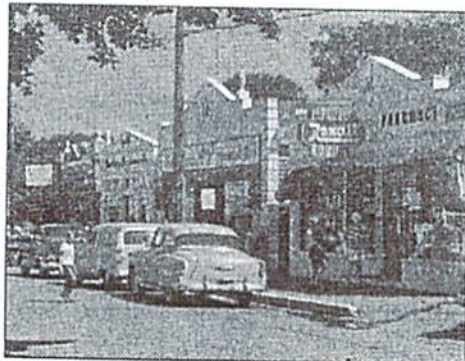
By TONY KELSO

The sign confirms it: After 74 years operating a store here in Duxbury, The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company is gone. With the sale of the A&P store earlier this year to Grand Union, Duxbury residents can not for the first time in a long time say, "Oh, I'll just run out to the A & P."

A& P opened its first store in Hall's Corner in June 1929, in the store block that now houses Cottons, on Standish Street. The opening was a quiet one. Plymouth's newspaper the *Old Colony Memorial* was the paper that at that time carried local Duxbury news, but did not chronicle the A& P's official opening.

The paper did mention in April 1929 that John Nathan was soon to finish his new modern and decorative brick building block. This is the block that today houses not just Cottons but Duxbury Wine and Spirits as well. The A & P survived its first summer however, because in September 1929 the OCM reported that the A & P and its meat department would remain open year round. Remember that in 1929 Duxbury, businesses rose and fell with the ebb and flow of summer residents and visitors.

The first A & P was one up on its competition, the First National store 2 doors down, by having its meat department stay open year round. This ploy was clearly trying to attract some of the year round population of 2000 residents to the new store. South Duxbury and the Hall's Corner intersection were beginning in 1929 to be an important shopping destination for Duxbury families with their newfound freedom of driving in their automobiles.



Duxbury Gli

The A&P got a big boost in 1933 with the appointment of Thomas W. Scott as its manager. Until his retirement in December 1953, Thomas Scott and his wife Florence were the mainstays of the A&P. Many long time Duxbury residents remember Mr. and Mrs. "A&P" Scott as being completely devoted to each other, with Florence Scott often helping out in the store. They lived a few doors down at 47 Washington Street, and Mrs. Scott would often walk up to help close up for the night. Bobbie Cutler, co-founder of the *Duxbury Clipper*, wrote a touching remembrance of Mrs. Scott, and how she would often cook and deliver a hot casserole to the *Clipper* crew as they labored late on Monday nights. Mr. and Mrs. Scott died within a week of each in March 1979, still proud of how the A&P had prospered in Duxbury.

In May 1952, when the First National store closed in Hall's Corner, the A&P moved two doors down and opened a new "Super" market, "the latest and best in food marketing". This today is the Duxbury Pizza building at 7 Standish Street. This store was complete with a frozen food department, bakery, self-serve dairy section, refrigerated produce racks and a fish department. It featured wide aisles and parking facilities in the rear, a big improvement on the earlier store. The opening festivities, orchestrated by Thomas Scott, included free prizes, such as automatic toasters, Brownie cameras, electric shavers, steam and waffle irons and giveaways like food baskets and hams. Free souvenirs such as measuring spoons and "novelty" banks were given to all customers. I would venture to say that a few of these might still be found in some Duxbury homes and attics.

The A&P store stayed as an anchor store in Hall's Corner from 1952 until 1968. This writer remembers the intoxicating smell permeating the store of the A&P brand "Eight O'Clock" coffee being ground fresh in large red coffee mills. When the new plaza on Depot Street built by Trapelo Realty Trust and the Davidson family, opened up in 1969 the store moved over there as an anchor. This quickly became locally known as the A&P plaza. Will it continue to be referred to by that name? The store continued to remodel and expand at least twice until it was sold to Grand Union in 2003.

Since 1929, the A&P store in Duxbury has been both emblematic of many small towns in America, all with their local A&P markets, and reflective of this particular small coastal town, and its 20th century changes and evolutions of market shopping. Or as one old A&P ad said, "shopping with convenience in mind. Come be thrilled! Come be thrifty!"